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CONSIDERATIONS

ON THE

PRESENT TIMES,

ADDRESSED TO

THE PARISHIONERS OF MIDDLEHAM,

WITH THE

WARNING

OF THE

General Assembly of the Church of Scotland.

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BY R. B. NICKOLLS, L. L. B. DEAN.
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TO THE
PARISHIONERS OF MIDDLEHAM.

BEING unavoidably absent from you, my Brethren, at this awful crisis, which demands every possible attention from a Pastor to his Flock, I conceived that I could not render you a more essential service than by reprinting for your use, and recommending to your serious perusal, the subjoined "Warning and Admonition addressed by the Commission of the General Assembly, to the Church of Scotland;" as the present situation of public affairs renders it necessary to bring forward every motive of *duty* that may call forth our exertions, and every consolation of *hope* that may support us in our struggle to maintain our RELIGION, LIBERTY and LAWS. But tho' I cannot superadd any arguments more worthy of your attention than such as are contained in the following "Warning and Admonition," yet my zealous regard for our common cause, as well as for your particular edification and encouragement, will not allow me to withhold a few considerations which may tend to confirm your attachment to the cause of Religion and your Country.

I. Our Lord puts the question to the Disciples, (Luke xviii, 8) "When the Son of Man cometh shall he find faith on the Earth?" Whether this advent may refer to the Millennium or the general Judgment, certain it is, a previous decline of Religion, and the spreading of infidelity, is implied in the question; and therefore, it is peculiarly incumbent upon those who desire "to inherit the Promises" to discern "the Signs of the Times", and from the progress of infidelity to take warning, to *fear* for themselves, and by a *stricter piety* and *severer virtue* to prepare for whatever events may arise; that when our Lord cometh in any of his extraordinary Visitations, "when he ariseth to shake terribly the Earth", (Isaiah ii, 19) we may be found with our Loins girded about and our Lamps burning, "like unto

unto men that wait for the Lord". For, if infidelity be one of the signs preceding our Lord's coming, never had believers more need "*to watch*"—for never since the first promulgation of Christianity was infidelity so widely spread, so *openly* and *daringly* professed. Never did a whole nation that had once professed it *entirely* abjure, *knowingly*, *wilfully* and *presumptuously*, all Religion natural and revealed, till France rose up the first example of avowed Atheism and open contempt of all Religion. Never was it before known in the world that a Conspiracy should spread itself thro' the various Cities and Regions of the Earth to preach Atheism, to overthrow all Religions and all existing Governments that men may be left uncontrouled by Religion and Laws, by any hopes or fears of HEREAFTER, to the unreserved gratification of every sensual and malicious passion which can degrade men into Brutes and Demons. I am not speaking at random. I refer to the work of the Atheist Condorcet of France, one of the Authors of the Revolution and the present war, who since has gone by a miserable Death to his own Place.—I refer to Writers who have adopted the folly of Atheism of late among ourselves: * I refer to the authorities, amounting to demonstration, produced by Professor Robinson, (of Edinburgh) in his "*Proofs of a Conspiracy for the Overthrow of all the Religions and Governments of the World*", and published last year. I refer to the Decrees of the French Republick declaring Death to be a perpetual Sleep—to the ACTS of the French Republick for the Annihilation of all Religion and Morality, especially that foulest of all the setting up an infamous Woman in the Temple of God to be worshipped as the Goddess of Liberty! I refer to the Jacobinical Clubs in England and Scotland, and their Correspondence with the enemies of Religion and their Country, in which they applaud the *Anarchy*, the *Massacres*, the *Atheism*, of France, and avow their design to imitate their proceedings at Home! I refer to several of *their* memorials presented to the Convention of France, recommending a *Community of Wives*, and the taking of Children out of the hands of their Parents to train them up to Anarchy and Blood! To which I must add that the cold bloody mindedness of these lying advocates of "*the Rights of Man*", so far from looking with an eye of pity to "*the Sufferings of Man*", recommend the persisting "*with a firm step thro' the immensity of ages*" (the very words of Condorcet) in the work of Atheism and Murder, for the purpose of plucking up all Religion, Morality and Government from the very foundations!!! Societies, secretly

* See among others, the Publications of one GODWIN.

secretly corresponding with other affiliated Societies for the same purpose, have subsisted a considerable time past, some of them having had their commencement above twenty years ago; and have spread into no less than 58 PRINCIPAL CITIES AND NATIONS of Europe and America. Great-Britain itself contains no less than TEN OF THEM. To give a full account of their principles, their designs and diabolical devices, would require a volume: whoever desires fuller information on the subject, must have recourse to Professor Robinson's book,* which furnishes A KEY to the Revolution in France, and explains other great and revolutionary events of the present time. Suffice it here to say, from documents that Writer has adduced, that the secret principles of these Societies are as follow; "that God and the World are the same thing—that all Religion is without foundation—that every peasant, citizen and householder, is a sovereign; that all Government is an injurious usurpation on the natural rights of man—that Nations are to be brought back to a State of Nature, by peaceable means if possible, if not by FORCE. The first aim of the promoters of these principles is to get possession of RICHES, POWER and INFLUENCE, WITHOUT INDUSTRY: (witness France)—to deceive the bulk of the people into the support of their measures by a PRETENDED LIBERTY and EQUALITY: to have no scruples about the means they employ to accomplish their ends, murder, assassination, poisoning, treason, murder of parents or of children, or in short any other crime that may forward their purposes—that the Societies have a right to rule the world—to abolish Christianity in order that dissolute manners and universal profligacy may procure them the adherence of THE WICKED, and enable them to overturn all the Civil Governments of Europe; after which they will extend their conquests to other quarters of the world, till they have reduced mankind to one undistinguished chaotic mass of LIBERTY and EQUALITY! and having thus got rid of religion to rule the world".

I appeal to the common sense of every man, whether these principles do not explain the conduct of the French Nation, and of their murderous, traitorous and incendiary-associates in Great-Britain and Ireland—whether they do not shew, most evidently, that the corresponding Jacobin Clubs in various parts of Europe have prepared the way for that success which the French arms, without the prevalence of French principles, would never otherwise have obtained; and that therefore such Societies in Great-Britain should not only be put down and their members

* And Abbé BARRUEL'S.

bers *brought to justice*, but that every man who values his religion, his life and liberty, should assist in bringing before the public all such traitorous Associations.—But “be not afraid of their terror”, neither let these things shake your faith in God or his Christ: for they were foreseen and foretold by the Spirit of Prophecy: “The perilous times of these latter days”, the pernicious principles, the abominable practices, the Atheism, rebellion and licence, the high boasts of the “*Great Nation*,” and of the present times, you will find exactly described and predicted by St. Paul in his Second Epistle to Timothy, Chapters 2d and 3d, and also by St. Peter in the 3d Chapter of his Second Epistle. If you consult these Passages, you cannot fail to observe the conformity of the events and the prediction: your faith in the Gospel of Christ will even be confirmed by the attempts of wicked men to destroy it: you will find that a discovery of their principles was to be made; that their progress would receive a check, and that the authors of such evils should meet with perdition; to them should be reserved the mists of darkness for ever. 2 Peter, ii. 17. and iii. 7.

II. The next remarkable “Sign of the Times” is the late conquest of Rome, the fall of the Papal Power and the seizure of the dominions of the Papacy, “in one hour”; as St. John speaks respecting the suddenness of the event, and we perceive it to be the case. The Papacy received its dominion from France; and France is the Power designed by the Spirit of Prophecy, (under the name of a nation from the North in Jeremiah, Chapters 50 and 51, compared with Revelations 17) for the Subversion of the Power of the See of Rome, or mystic Babylon. For that Rome Papal is intended under that Symbol, we learn from Revelat. 17, which describes the Papal Power as yet to come in St. John’s time, as an eighth beast, and to receive its dominion from the ten Horns or Kings, which had no existence in St. John’s time, but were to arise afterwards, when the Roman Empire should be broken in pieces; who should afterwards hate the Whore (Papal Rome) and make her desolate and naked, and should consume her flesh (destroy her temporal dominion) and burn her with fire; (the symbol of war). And has not France hated the Whore, and taken away her dominion and that by War?

Two very important inferences are to be drawn from this great event. The first is, that they who are of the Communion of the Church of Rome, may perceive that she is that corrupt, idolatrous and persecuting Church spoken of in the Revelation of St. John, especially Chapters 17 and 18; and *therefore* they should obey the Angel’s message, Chap. 18, iv, and leave her Communion.

Communion. "Come out of her my people, lest ye be partakers of her plagues."

In the next place this Event demonstrates the Truth of Scripture Prophecy: for "the Testimony of Jesus is the spirit of Prophecy": the accomplishment of Prophecy establishes the truth of Christianity: and its accomplishment, in past or present times, is a pledge and assurance that what remains to be fulfilled *in future*, will also be completed in its proper place and season. For the Scripture Prophecies extend to the end of the world, and therefore cannot be fulfilled all at once; but as the corresponding events arise in order of time, and answer the Series of Prophecy. We may therefore console ourselves with the "sure and certain hope" that all the Prophecies and all the Promises of Christ to his Church will be fulfilled in the most exact conformity of the event with the Promise or Prophecy in every instance: we may assure ourselves that the gates of hell, its force or policy shall never prevail over the Church of Christ; to exemplify which blessed Promise seems to be one design of the Revelation of St. John: "no weapon formed against the Church of Christ shall prosper": all the wit and learning and power of the Roman Empire exerted with all possible malignity for three hundred years, (and they were much greater than the wit and power of France) could not destroy the Christian Faith; on the contrary it rose superior to its enemies and triumphed gloriously. So it shall continue to do. "Our Lord at the head of us shall go on 'conquering and to conquer': he shall rule his enemies with a rod of iron; he shall break them in pieces like a potter's vessel: they shall meet the fierceness of his anger and displeasure; and in spite of French Tyranny and French Infidelity and domestic Treason, the Church of Christ shall be "all beautiful, glorious and triumphant, and the servants of Christ shall partake of the joy and triumph of their Lord, shall live and reign with him". For a description of this glorious and happy state, I must refer you to the Prophecies of Isaiah on this head, and the latter chapters of the Revelation of St. John.

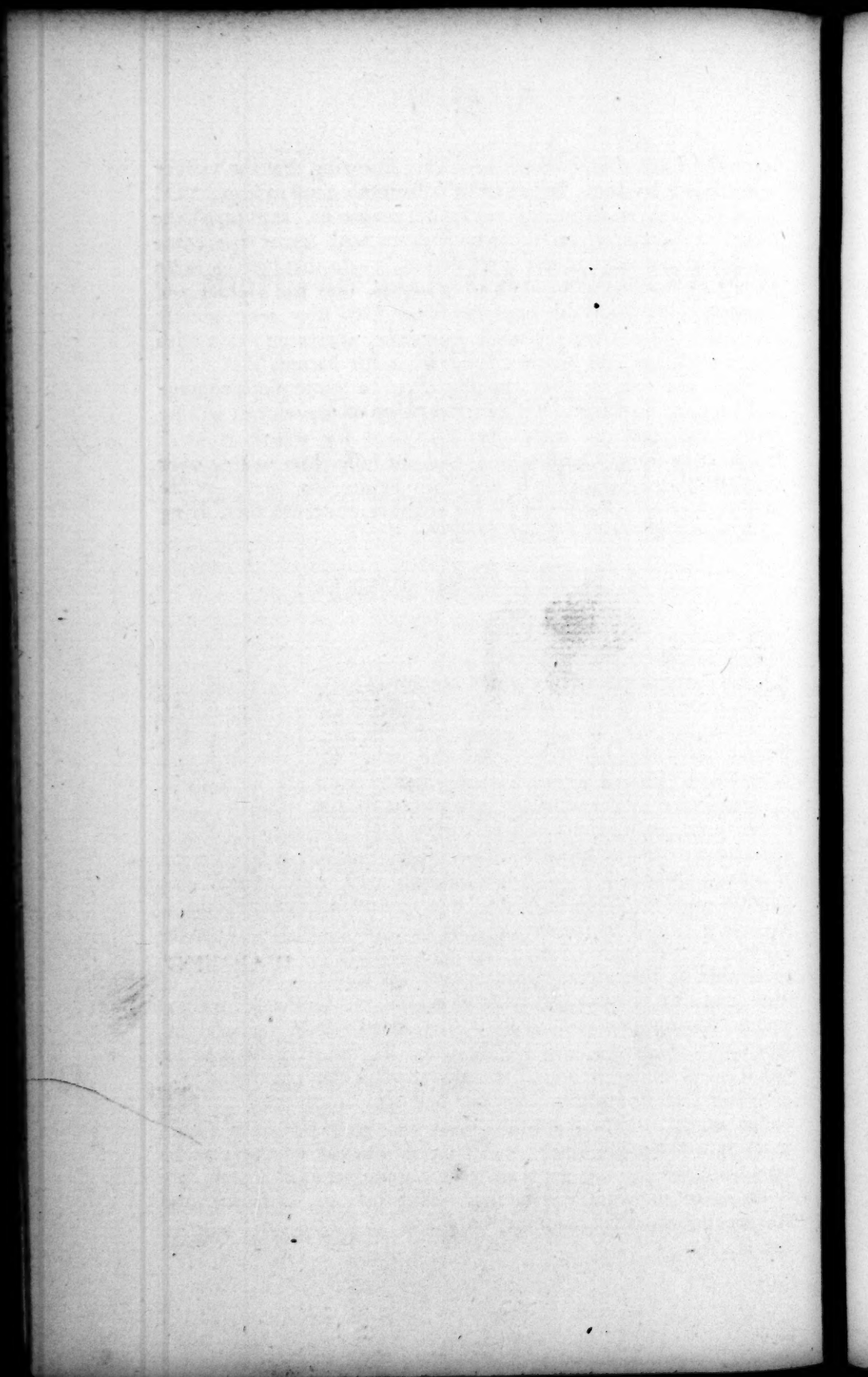
Having this assurance of the final Triumph of our Faith, and the *inevitable*, as well as *tremendous* destruction of all its enemies, let us hold fast the Profession of our Faith without wavering. In this Faith, with these hopes before us, let no afflictions, dangers or discouragements, (which may be sent for our trial and purification) shake our resolution. Let us stand forth in defence of our Religion and Laws, our wives and children, against a ferocious enemy, who hath uttered his proud defiance against the Almighty, broken down the Altars, polluted the
Temples

Temples of the most High; ravaged the earth, destroyed in his own land full two millions of his own people, with 250,000 women and 240,000 children and 24,000 priests; exclusive of the lives lost in war; an enemy who hath oppressed every people among whom he has set his foot, with the most grievous exactions; barbarously and foully violated the chastity of their women of every age, even tho' afflicted with loathsome diseases. This ferocious enemy, religion, virtue, duty, interest, equally call upon you to oppose at the hazard of your lives, at the expence of your property, which the unrelenting foe would put under requisition for his own use. Energy and exertion will ever be attended with effect; with comfort and consolation also from a sense of having done our duty. A cowardly compromise would leave us slaves at the foot of the most cold blooded tyranny the world ever beheld. Providence will give a glorious issue to the exertions of those who are grieved for the blasphemy against his Name. Read the Books of Maccabees, and see this verified—2 Maccabees, ch. 14, 15. Consider the glorious triumphs which the pious zeal of one man gave rise to, and the deliverance it procured to his country; and see the miserable end of Antiochus and Nicanor, the persecutors of the Jews, and the blasphemers of their God! "Oh! destroy not so mightily and barbarously" said the pious Judas Maccabæus to the impious and desolating tyrant Nicanor; "but give honour to that day which he that seeth all things hath honoured," (that sacred day which the French have abolished)—"then the most ungracious wretch demanded *if there were a mighty one in Heaven?* And when they said *there is a living Lord and mighty, who commanded the seventh day to be kept*; then said Nicanor, and I ALSO am mighty upon earth—! So Nicanor in exceeding pride and haughtiness determined to set up a public monument of his victory over Judas and them that were with him.—But Maccabæus had ever sure confidence that the Lord would help him. Wherefore he exhorted his People not to fear the coming of the heathen against them, but to remember the aid which in former times they had received from Heaven, and now to expect the victory which should come from the Almighty. And so comforting them out of the Law and the Prophets, when he had stirred up their minds, he gave them their charge, shewing them therewithal the falsehood of the Heathen and the breach of oaths; so they determined manfully to try the matter by conflicts because THE CITY, THE SANCTUARY, and TEMPLE were in danger. And now when as all looked what should be the trial (as the eyes of all the world are now upon us) and the enemies were already come near, Maccabæus called upon

upon the Lord that worketh wonders, knowing that the victory cometh not by arms, but even as it seemeth good to him; 'O! Lord of Heaven send a good Angel before us, and thro' the might of thine arm, let those be stricken with terror that come up against thy holy people to blaspheme';—so that fighting with their hands and praying with their hearts, they had victory and triumph, and thro' the appearance of God they were greatly cheered. Now when the battle was done, returning again with joy, they knew that Nicanor lay dead in his harness".

Such will ever in their opposite issues be found pious courage and impious boasting. "The triumphing of the wicked will be short—and they that have seen him shall say where is he?" "The enemies of Christ who would not suffer him to rule over them shall be brought forth and slain before his face".—"He shall reign till he hath put all his enemies under his feet, King of Kings and Lord of Lords!"

WARNING



WARNING AND ADMONITION

TO THE

PEOPLE OF SCOTLAND,

Published by the Commission of the General Assembly, and ordered to be read by the Ministers of that Church, from their respective Pulpits, on the Day appointed for

A NATIONAL FAST.

IN the arduous contest in which we are at present engaged, we have not as yet met with any national disaster; but, while the other States of Europe, intimidated by the progress of the French arms, are bending under the yoke, we have hitherto been able to protect our commerce, and to ward off the hostilities which have been directed against our shores. While, brethren, you celebrate the gallantry of our seamen, the vigilance and activity of our naval administration, the skill and alertness of our commanders; while you honour, with daily expressions of your good will, the illustrious heroes who led to victory, and pay every tribute to the memory of the brave and faithful men who fell in the cause of their country,—amidst the acknowledgments due to human exertions, look up to HIM whom the wind and the seas obey. Recollect the circumstances which render the time and the measure of a naval victory completely dependent upon the will of Heaven. In the train of success which has attended us round the globe, mark the continued interposition of Providence for our defence; and, after the example of the noble Admirals, who, in the presence of their Sovereign, presented upon the Altar of GOD, the colours which have been won in the great naval engagements of this war, let all ranks of men unite in saying, “Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name be the glory.”

The

The succession of naval victories, which, we trust, brethren, you recollect with pious gratitude, has filled our enemies with rage. They are indignant that there is one nation in Europe, over which, in the unexampled career of their fortune, they have never gained any advantage; which has persevered in opposing its influence to the wild progress of their ambition, and has had the magnanimity to extend its views to the independence of Europe, and the liberties of mankind. They are indignant that there is one free government which repudiates their false maxims; one established constitution which exposes the chimerical nature of their system; one happy country, where the complete security, which the subject derives from the legal administration of justice, forms a striking contrast to the precarious tenure by which every man holds his life, his property, and his place in Society, under the unlimited despotism which has been engrafted upon their doctrines of liberty and equality. They have declared, that the French Republic and the British Government cannot subsist together. They are collecting on their coasts a great army, which, with a view both to insult and to intimidate us, they call, "the Army of England;" and, having rejected the equitable terms which we offered, without proposing in their turn any plan of pacification they boast that they will send this army to dictate in London the terms upon which they will condescend to give us peace.

After these declarations of the enemy, the war is not on our part a matter of choice. It is a war which the first law of nature, the great duty of self-preservation, renders just and necessary: it is a war not for wealth, for distant possessions, for commercial advantages: it is a war in defence of all the blessings which we have received from Heaven, in defence of the honour, the independence, the existence of the nation. Imagine not, brethren, that it is only a temporary interruption of your tranquillity, which you have reason to dread. The enemies with whom you now contend, come to seize your property, to lay waste your lands, and to repay the armies which invade you, with the spoil.—In the fury of their rapine, they will make no distinction; but the houses of the peasant and the landlord, of the farmer and the cottager, will be consumed in one flame. They come to wrest out of our hands the dominion of the sea, to annihilate our commerce, to render us completely subject to their power, and to reduce Great Britain to the condition of Venice, which after pretending to make free, they sold to the Emperor; of Holland, which their friendship has ruined; of the combination of States, called the Cisalpine Republic, which hold a precarious existence under the protection of a victorious French General.

They

They wage war against your form of government: and, if they accomplish their designs, you will be no longer a free people. Instead of that security which every man enjoys, by knowing that he cannot be condemned till his conduct has been fully investigated and the sentence of a jury has pronounced him guilty, there will be substituted the mandates of a government, which, under the pretext of liberty, sets no bounds to its despotism, which, without even the form of a trial, sends the suspected to public or to secret death, to prison or to banishment: which confiscates their effects, and extends its persecution to all their connections. Instead of a subordination of ranks, which we know to be the best guard of liberty, by which no man is excluded from rising to riches and honour, and the different orders of the State minister to the subsistence, the protection, and enjoyments of one another, there will be an equality of wretchedness, in which the rich are stripped of their property; the poor, without being permitted to share in the spoil, are deprived of their comforts; and all are alike subjected to arbitrary requisition, to insult and oppression. Your enemies come, brethren, not only to dethrone your KING, and to dismiss your PARLIAMENT, but they come, to overthrow that RELIGION which you and your fathers have professed, and the free exercise of which is one of the rights of a BRITISH subject. They wage war against the Scriptures which you revere; against the GOD in whom you trust. They have effaced from their calendar that day upon which Christians have, from the beginning, celebrated the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and they are endeavouring to obliterate every memorial of the Christian Religion. All religious establishment of every kind, all Christian belief and worship, they ridicule and proscribe. Were their impious threatenings to prevail, in those Churches where you are now met, you would assemble no more; the voice of your Pastors would never again be heard there. Instead of the cheering, consoling, elevating doctrines of the Gospel of Christ, there would be publicly inculcated in this land, that gloomy degrading system, which banishes Mind from the universe, which declares that death is an eternal sleep, and that beyond the grave, there is no punishment to the wicked, no reward to the righteous, no recompence for the troubles of life. The sound instruction of the Scriptures would yield to the delusive doctrines of a false philosophy, which shakes the security of government, destroys the innocence and tranquillity of private life, and gives licence to a multitude of crimes: and the dereliction of every religious principle would, in this country, be accompanied with the same brutality of rage, and the same flagitiousness of conduct, which have appeared in the atrocious deeds that have marked the progress of the French revolution.

Nor

Nor would it be in your power, brethren, to fly, as many inhabitants of France have fled, from these horrors; for whither could you go? If this Island becomes a province of France, there will be no longer an asylum for the wretched, no other habitation of religion, truth and justice: but one sound of tumult and uproar will be heard around the globe.

We beseech you brethren, seriously, to consider the dangers, of which we have given you a faithful picture: and we earnestly recommend it to all the Ministers of this National Church, to endeavour, by public and private instruction, to impress your minds with a sense of the duty which, in such circumstances, you owe to your country; and to encourage people of all ranks to resolve, like our King, and his two Houses of Parliament, that they will stand or fall with our Religion, our Laws, and Liberties. Is there a Briton whose heart will not accord with such admonitions? Is this a time to contend about political differences, when we are struggling for the very existence of the nation? Shall speculative improvements of the best constitution in the world, shall attachment to a party, or private dissatisfaction, unnerve the British arm, and lay our side open to the dagger of the foe? We have seen, with much satisfaction, the voluntary associations for the defence of the country, in which persons of rank and property, mingling with merchants, manufacturers, and mechanics, form a body of men trained to the use of arms, who, without forsaking the occupations of peace, are ready to repress internal tumult and to guard our shores against the approach of the foe. We behold with equal delight, another expression of the same patriotic spirit, in the alacrity with which money is furnished for the public service. While the taxes that have been lately imposed do not, in the smallest degree, affect the lower orders of the community, those who pay the largest share of them are so far from complaining of the burden created by the demands of the State, that we see them pressing forward to testify their zeal in the common cause, by a Voluntary Contribution of a large portion of their income. It is *wise* to think, that wealth cannot be so profitably expended as in preserving all that renders existence desirable: it is *virtuous* to learn private frugality from the extent of the national expenditure: it is *magnanimous* to relinquish every paltry scheme of hoarding up superfluities and savings, when all is at stake, and to trust, that every sacrifice will be abundantly recompensed by the gratitude of the country, and a share in the national prosperity. Let those who are restrained by the narrowness of their income, or the demands of families, from emulating the liberality of their brethren, be the more solicitous to exhibit every display of public spirit which their situation admits.

A season

A season of danger, of alarm, and national exertion, is a time when the laws should reign supreme; when every man should be found at his post, waiting in silence to receive the orders which may be given him, prompt in yielding obedience, and ready to lend to the community all his talents and all his vigour. At such a time, all who love their country, forgetting former quarrels, should, without recrimination, encourage one another under every hardship, and bear, without murmuring, every burden. Let every sinner think, that *he* adds to the sum of national guilt, and conspires, in his place to draw down the vengeance of Heaven upon the land which nourishes him. Let the frivolous manners, the languid, careless, selfish spirit, and that corruption of the whole character, which the continuance of peace and national prosperity tends to foster, yield the place which they have usurped in this country, to those manly virtues which the pressure of the times demands. Maintain, brethren, a sacred regard to all the rights of your neighbours: abandon every vicious pursuit; and center, in love to your country, those affections which, at other times, follow after vanity.—By this union of sentiment and of effort, you will expose the falsehood of that insidious distinction, which our enemies affect to draw between the Government and the People of Britain; and you will exhibit to their view a nation whom their emissaries were not able to *corrupt*, whom their boasting has not *intimidated*, and whom the history of their eventful Revolution is daily *confirming in attachment* to that unrivalled Constitution, of which, with an envious eye, and an usurping hand, they attempt to rob us. Let a firm faith in the superintending Providence of God, establish your minds, brethren, in perfect tranquillity with regard to the issue of the present contest. To resist the rude attack of the spoiler, to set bounds to the lawless ambition, and to prolong the reign of Order and Justice, is a duty which God hath imposed, a service which accords with the whole plan of His righteous administration, a work which HE approves, and which HE will bless. The combination of His enemies cannot shake the pillars of His everlasting throne. The Church of Christ was founded upon a “rock, against which the gates of Hell shall not prevail”; and notwithstanding the assertions and efforts of infidelity, the public establishment of Christianity shall continue to be the barrier, erected by the GOD of Truth, against the return of idolatry and superstition. “HE that is higher than the highest regardeth, and there be higher than they.”——“HE beholdeth mischief and spite, to requite them with His hand.”——“HE hath bent HIS bow;” and when HIS time is come, “HE will make ready HIS arrows upon the strings,”
and

and "will find out them that hate HIM." By continuing our successes at sea, HE may still turn the battle from our gates: or, if HE has destined, that upon our own land we are to contend, whether Great Britain shall retain its rank amongst the nations of the earth, or become an appendage of the French Republic, he may employ the confusion and destruction which await the invader, as an instrument of accelerating the return of peace. Be not afraid, brethren, of the threats of the foe: but "sanctify the LORD of Hosts himself, and let HIM be your fear, and let HIM be your DREAD." Recollect the glorious struggle by which your ancestors purchased the blessings of a free Government, and proving yourselves worthy of the precious inheritance which they had transmitted to you, trust in that arm which made *them* strong. "Remember the LORD, which is great and terrible; and fight for your brethren, your sons and your daughters, your wives and your houses." Set up your banners in HIS name, and HE will spread over you HIS impenetrable shield. "The right hand of the LORD, which doeth valiantly," shall again overthrow those who rise up against you; and your children's children shall, in this land, worship the GOD of their Fathers. Amen.



THE END.